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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
2 January 1963

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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Horacio Julio Ornes Coiscou

FILE

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2. Now 40 years old, Ornes was in 1948 serving as Chancellor in the Dominican Legation at San Jose, Costa Rica, when he was convicted in absentia by the Trujillo regime for crimes against the state. Ornes subsequently helped organize the Caribbean Legion, and reportedly was one of its best leaders. He participated in the 1948 revolution that brought Jose Figueres and the National Liberation party to power in Costa Rica.

3. In 1949 he was captured after leading an abortive invasion of the Dominican Republic against the Trujillo dictatorship. He was released under Trujillo's amnesty in 1950 after confessing his "mistakes." Dominicans who knew Ornes in exile generally regard him as an anti-Communist, but they do not trust him because of his excessive political ambition, and because they think he renounced his ideals after being captured by Trujillo.

4. During this period, however, Ornes was associated for a time with Tulio Arvelo Delgado--a high official, if not the actual leader of the Dominican Popular Socialist (Communist) party (PSPD).

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his enemies. In 1957 Ornes reportedly said he planned to take a trip to Moscow "for his health." Ornes castigated the US when it appeared to support Trujillo and has praised the US when it appeared to be critical of the dictatorship.

5. Until the fall of the Trujillo regime, Ornes travelled extensively in the Caribbean area seeking support for his oppositionist activity. In 1956 he helped found the Dominican Revolutionary Vanguard (VRD), an exile group with headquarters in Puerto Rico and with branches in other areas of the Caribbean. The VRD, commonly referred to as Vanguardia, has been described as anti-Communist, moderate, and nationalistic. Since becoming an official party in 1962, with Ornes as its head, the Vanguardia has not followed a consistent political line. As the Vanguardia's nominee, Ornes last summer reportedly considered joining a coalition backing a candidate considered unsavory by many Dominicans because of his ties with the former dictatorship. Also during the summer, Ornes favored postponing elections until February or March 1963.

6. In the last days of the recent election campaign, the Vanguardia threw its support behind the winning presidential candidate, Juan Bosch, and his Dominican Revolutionary party (PRD). Out of a total of 1,092,000 ballots reportedly cast, the Vanguardia received only 15,210, a total exceeded by four other losing parties.

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